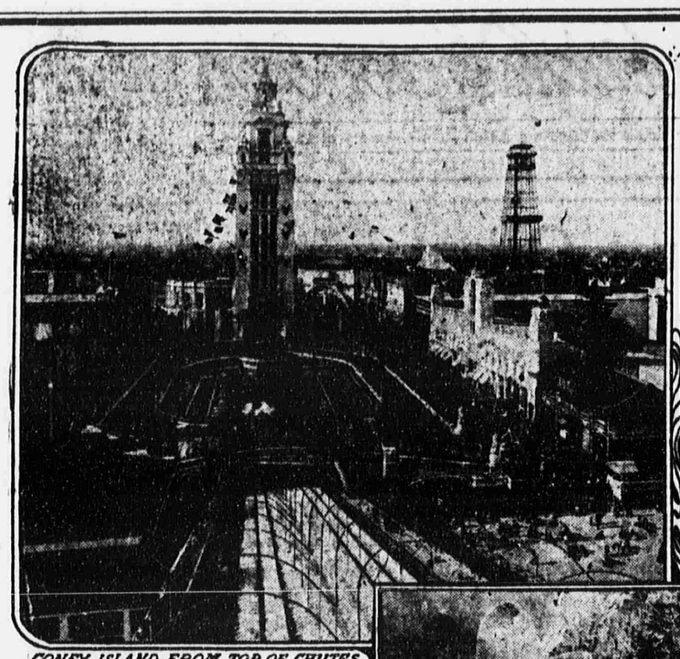
THE CONEY ISLAND YOU DON'T SEE.

Human Side of the Big Pleasure Ground—College Graduates, Dreamy Inventors, Unemployed Actors, Tramps, Rich Men, Artists, All in the Continuous Show That Goes On All Summer Long.

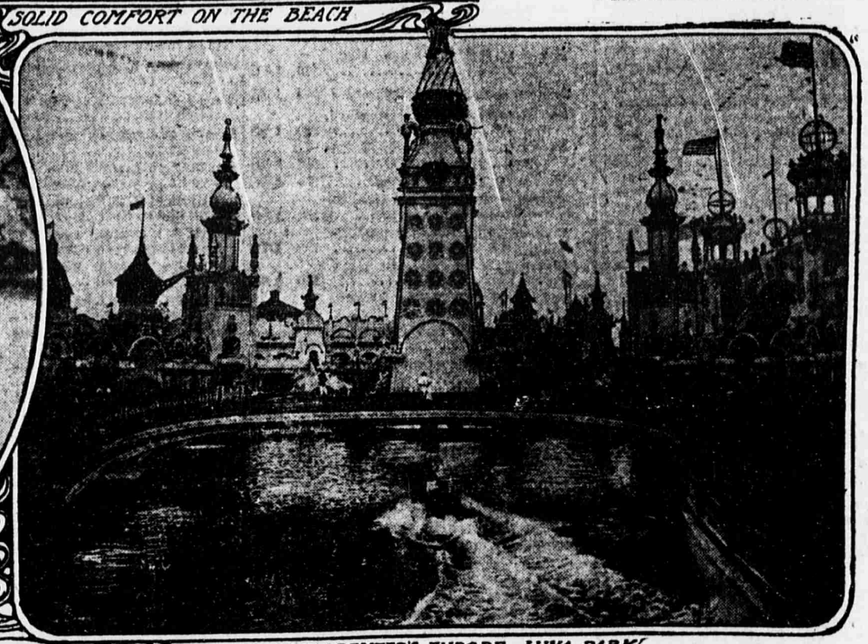


CONEY ISLAND FROM TOP OF CHUTES IN DREAMLAND

SOLID COMFORT ON THE BEACH

JIM GABRIEL, OUTLAW

MISS LAUREL ORMOND, THE BANDIT QUEEN



THE STAGE CARPENTER'S EUROPE,—LUNA PARK!

To a crash of brass from a near-cowboy band the great stage doors of a Wild West concession open, and out upon the esplanade that rims the Luna Park lagoon rides sedately The Girl in the Red Shirt. Crowding at her bronco's heels there passes before you the little cavalcade of cowpunchers and train robbers, led by bad but handsome *Jim Dalton*, and next comes tumbling along in joyous irregularity a picturesque troop of stageland ranch folk.

Bringing up the rear are the elephants, Alice and Judy, who plod by ponderously under their gold and red howdahs and trappings to the music of the band. But if you are a sulphite and artistic your eye is following only The Girl in the Red Shirt.

Perhaps you have come to Coney Island quite prepared, like thousands of others, to take the bizarre costumes and the unusual as a matter of course. Here is the Land of Surprise, you say, in which brains, money and art—there is art here, too—have combined to make the unexpected so farspread that even the extraordinary becomes the commonplace.

Still, as your eye follows "Red Shirt" circling the lagoon while she sits her bronco as if horse and rider were all one splendid machine, you are compelled to admit that you had not quite expected this. When you have heard her little story, which will be told in its proper place, you will doubtless realize that after all you do not know your Coney, and that not until you start to dig, if only a little way, toward the heart of things down on the island do you begin to uncover the real surprises that even a press agent cannot embellish.

This is a story of the human side of the big pleasure ground, little glints on the lives of a few of the men and women who help to make Coney Island the greatest show on earth. If you are one of the casual visitors who leave there with only a blurred recollection of whirling machines, flags and pennants whipping the night sky, crashing bands, geishas, minarets, droning organs and a glitter, blare and racket, you doubtless share the general impression that the show people are automatons who get out of bed at noon, start the wheels going for a consideration, stop them at some unearthly hour and go back to bed. During the winter they—well, you don't know what they do during the winter; but probably they hibernate, like the bears of the animal shows.

Now consider; for instance, that boyish looking young person standing over near a frankfurter booth, who, to judge from his turned up trousers and pancake hat, might be a Yale undergraduate who has just taken a run down from New Haven. During the last four years he has accomplished more things in the show business than even Barnum attempted in a long lifetime, and to-day this young man of 32 is still building so many castles in the air that he would probably be locked in an asylum if he had not proved his ability to finish off his air castles of the past by putting solid foundations under them.

Over in the "End of the World" show in Dreamland another youth named Joe Tracy entertains you all day in the amusement park, but at midnight hurries to his room in a Surf avenue hotel to burn the daybreak oil while laboring to perfect his inventions.

Tracy's people sent him to Boston College with the hope that he would become a clergyman. The nearest he came to this was when he ran away to be an actor and succeeded Daniel Sully in the title part of "The Parish Priest." Now he plays the Devil all day in the Dreamland show and at present is devoting the greater part of the night to trying to perfect his latest idea, a bottle that cannot be refilled.

"I thought I had it once," he says, with a mournful smile, "till I learned by experiment that my bottle in its present shape can be refilled in a vacuum. I'll hit it yet and make a bunch of money."

Nellie Wallace, a pretty English singer, whose part in another Coney show is largely one of thought, came to America a few months ago to sing. Shortly after she reached the west coast she lost her job and all her belongings in the earthquake.

A few weeks later she managed to reach New York and started to walk from Twenty-third street all the way down to the British Consulate to seek assistance. Almost starving she fainted at Fourteenth street.

A charitable worker named Mrs. Freeze who happened by at the time made her way through the crowd that surrounded Miss Wallace and took her to the Freeze home at 26 Horatio street and nursed her back to health. Then, when Miss Wallace was able to seek work, the only place offered her by the theatrical men was the one she now has at Coney Island, and, quite sensibly, she took it.

One graduate of the University of Bonn who suffers from periodical attacks of the *wanderlust* struck the resort this summer financially warped. Now he is doing odd jobs down there while not acting as interpreter for the drove of European performers connected with the various shows.

At the top of the Luna chutes a Brooklyn lawyer keeps the crowd in line simply because his physician told him he must seek an outdoor job for a while if he wanted to see the snow fly again. Two Yale freshmen work in Bostock's and say they are having the summer of their lives. A Harvard student got a job helping people out of the boats at the foot of the Mountain Torrent, but he spent so much time in the gin fizz belt that things happened to him, and he went away from there.

Jim Gabriel, who says he was decent before "I came from God's country to this place, where I now hold up and rob the same train six times a day," waxes indignant when asked if he was an actor before he came to Coney Island. Impressively he tells you that he was born and raised among Western hills "so high that you have to look twice to see the tops of them," and when you apologize for having told him that he looks like Edwin Booth he will show you his well thumbed letter from Gen. Miles which commends the ex-scout for his bravery during the Wounded Knee campaign.

His fat scrapbook is filled with clippings about his endurance ride when, mounted on Grizzly Adams, the horse he now rides at Coney, he made a lonely journey across the mountains and plains from Fort Sheridan, Wyo., to Chicago in eighty-five days. The Government sent Gabriel on that trip to test the staying powers of the American range horse, and when Grizzly Adams had completed the long jog ten days earlier than had been expected the exports of Western horses for service in European cavalries increased 85 per cent.

Ex-Sheriff Buttling, hero of many a political scrimmage in Kings, bustles about Dreamland directing affairs in the big white park and dodging horsemen who want to name a runner after him. Last year a horse owner called one of his string Bill Buttling, and the ex-Sheriff felt it his duty to got out to the track to bet much money on his namesake.

When the Sheriff had to leave the track to hurry back through the afterglow toward Dreamland, Bill Buttling was still running. A few weeks later, however, Bill went to the post a 60 to 1 shot and got away with it, but Sheriff Buttling didn't go out to the track that day, and so he now says that there's nothing to it.

You will find more stage people along Surf avenue than you can round up at Broadway and Fortieth street at high noon. "Big" Mason, a brother of John Mason, and himself an actor, manages Dreamland's "Creation" show. Mart Cody, who for fifteen years was stage manager for old Fritz Emmet when he wasn't trying to manage Fritz, not long ago made the individual hit of "Ninety and Nine" and now, astride a horse, he chases bad *Jim Dalton* every time the bandit robs the train.

Joe Artressi, who does the talking for Marceline on the Hippodrome stage during the winter, was a spieler in front of a Coney show early this summer, until one day Marceline caught him at it. Now the Hippodrome clown pays Artressi $18 a week all summer to stop spieling and so save his voice from ruin.

Louis Mann had one concession at the resort last season and Marie Dressler sold peanuts from June till September. Andrew Mack ran a fishing booth.

Charley Green, first husband of Annie Ward Tiffany, had the milk concession and the contract to feed the little people of Midget City. Elfie Andreas, formerly with the Savage forces, is content with a thinking and dancing part in another concession as long as she has her morning salt water swim and sea breezes as perquisites.

When one looks over all the interesting persons that help to make the wheels go at Coney Island, perhaps Miss Laurel Ormond of Lakewood and Manhattan maybe selected as especially interesting. All the others have been connected more or less with stageland—even Jim Gabriel travelled with Buffalo Bill for a few seasons—but Miss Ormond never did anything in her life until she became the bandit queen of a Luna show this season, unless under work one includes riding her horse at Lakewood, finishing a college course and studying art with William M. Chase.

To begin with, Miss Ormond—which is merely a stage name—is not pretty. She is beautiful, and perhaps one must be an artist to understand the nice distinction. Henry James's *Lady Beldonald* of "The Beldonald Holbein" story, for instance, would doubtless puzzle her bromide brain to find the attractiveness of the bandit queen which Sargent commented on while visiting the Chase school, and which Harrison Fisher, Jay Chambers, William Jordan and other artists who have seen "Red Shirt" at Coney Island are talking about.

Lady Beldonald, it will be remembered was the pink and white English beauty who employed as a companion an American woman whom *Lady Beldonald* considered plain, and who would therefore act as a foil to bring out the English girl's charms. Then, in true Jamesesque fashion, nothing really happens except that all the titled young woman's artist friends promptly desert her to fall in adoration before the American with importunities to be permitted to paint her portrait, while the English girl, solitary in a corner, tries to figure it all out.

Miss Ormond's people have seen her do the unusual so often that long ago they learned to accept her w hims as inevitable. Nevertheless hands were raised in horror last spring by her parents, her sister, and her brother-in-law, who is well known in his profession in Manhattan, when the girl announced that she was going to support herself by going on the stage.

Brother-in-law pleaded, and when he found that things were going against him he asked Miss Laurel—that much of her name is her own—at least to take a stage name. Her sister sent her a note summoning her to the Holland House, where she hoped to talk down the stage notion during luncheon.

"And for heaven's sake, Laurel," concluded the note, "wear something decent for once in your life."

Wherefore Miss Laurel met her sister in one of the parlors of the hotel a few days later wearing a brown cloth rainy daisy and shirtwaist. Below the skirt hem was a pair of tan riding boots from the Wildest West with big Mexican spurs fastened to the heels. Miss Laurel clanked toward the hotel dining room quite unconimproved on the girl's own selection of a costume, with its tawny leather riding skirt and tan boots, whose softened values merge so beautifully with the crimson waist and olive complexion. Instinctively she seems to have realized that one bit of ribbon would have spoiled all the simplicity of the costume, and because of this innate æsthetic sense there is no ribbon.

Mother and daughter were in no mood, however, to go in for æsthetics just then. Mother sank back on a bench. The bandit queen jumped to the ground and was shedding very unqueenly tears while she fanned her.

Between sobs she was assuring her mother that she disliked the parade part of the work as much as mother did, but that she just had to do it, so there! At this moment along came Bill Thompson, press agent extraordinary, and for the first time he learned who Miss Laurel is.

Since that day life has lost its joys for Press Agent Bill. Day fades into night while he stands before the queen and pleads with her to let him tell in the newspapers her name and family history back to her grandfather.

Again and again she answers that the day he does she will leave the park, and Bill, who knows that she will keep her word, cornedly.

"Now don't waste time talking, Clara," she began, "because I 've signed a contract with the train robbery people at Coney Island since I saw you last.

"First I went up to the Hippodrome and told them I wanted something to do that had plunging horses in it, and in which I could ride, and Mr. Temple told me of the position I have now. I had to wear my boots here to-day because by the time I get back to the island this afternoon I shan't have much time to change my clothes before the show begins."

When Clara told her husband later in the day of what had happened brother-in-law didn't express any violent longing to go down to see the performance, and altogether the family showed a woeful lack of appreciation of the fame that had come to them. Clara, who is a twin sister of Laurel, held back for a few days also, but finally when her mother insisted upon going to the island to see Laurel do her stunts of horsemanship she felt it her duty to accompany mother.

As Mrs. "Ormond" and her married daughter entered the park they saw at the head of a little parade coming toward them a hatless girl, raven haired, dark skinned and wearing the crimson waist that has given the girl the nickname of Red Shirt among the show people, riding a bronco just back of the cowboy band. A great tone painter like Whistler could not have wrings his hands and bleats. And up in Manhattan brother-in-law begins to tremble every time he sees the words Coney Island in print.

Now the circus parade has come to disturb her less and less, and incidentally she is getting the excitement her emotional nature craves. Already she has received a bruised back during one of her wild rides in the show, has had her shoulder dislocated another time, and as this is being written her left arm is wound in bandages put on in the reception hospital after her bronco had insisted upon tripping on the stage railway tracks and knocking over some stage carpenter architecture upon her before she could scramble to her feet.

A few hours later she was on the job again as *Jane Rogers*, the admiration of the cowboy critics of horsemanship, the despair of press agents and the joy of the sulphites, who, knowing nothing of her personality, look upon her from afar as they would upon a picture—merely as "a spot on the wall."

Somewhere on the esplanade along which *Jane Rogers* parades her troop you will see a sallow young man, hands in pockets, and usually wearing a yachting cap. His careless pose is a correct imitation of a man in the throes of not working. But he works.

"Oh, any chump can open a set of books," modestly says Skip Dundy, whose ability to turn a shoestring into a few hundred thousand dollars has made Fred Thompson's dreams of a new Coney Island and a Hippodrome practical.

When you press him for details of the things the two young men have accomplished he straightway shifts the glory to his partner's shoulders.

"When I met Fred, a few years ago," says Skip, "I saw that I needed him, and then I deliberately skinned him and handed it back to him before I could convince him how much he needed me. Then we got together on a scenic stunt called 'A Trip to the Moon,' which you'll find sandwiched in down near the gate

"About this time Fred began to smoke Turkish cigarettes, and from that, of course, it was only a step to dreaming out loud. He sprung some of the dreams on me and I told him to smoke another and then take a long, refreshing sleep.

"One day I must have smoked one of them myself, because I started out, I remember, to get somebody to bet a million on the game. Talk about pulling teeth! Then one night we got Luna Park open, with $26 in our pockets and $600,000 in debt.

"If you came here the opening night you probably remember that you got in free if you offered the ticket seller anything larger than a ten cent piece. We had to let hundreds in free during the first few hours, because we didn't have the money to make change.

"At the end of the season we had probably as much as $40 between us, but we had paid more debts than I ever owned before.

"The wheels in Fred's head were throwing off sparks now. Did you ever listen to him think? No? Well, that's the only time he sits down—when he's thinking.

"'And then,' he begins in the middle, taking it for granted that you know what he has been thinking about right along—'and then I'll have 200 girls come out on the stage dancing a ballet on horseback. That ought to hold 'em for a while, eh?'

"'Sure it will,' I'd say, soothingly, like the keeper in the violent ward. 'Smoke another, my boy.'

"Then he'd just smile pityingly at me and away he'd go back into a state of coma again; and as the dreams began to straighten out in his brain he would smile joyously at his own thoughts. I had it all framed up about this time to write home to his folks about him.

"One day he got out some sheets of drawing paper and began to design stage settings, limelight architecture and tanks with one hand, while he balanced a hot dog sandwich with the other. Finally he handed me a bunch of nice, tidy drawings on yellow paper that made them look like lemons at first. When I had looked 'em over, however, I took an afternoon off and we built the Hippodrome."

Young Mr. Thompson wasn't seen much in Manhattan while Luna Park was building. Open work trousers are very embarrassing on Broadway at any time and were doubly so at that period, when men's coats were much shorter than they are now.

And Skip Dundy, the watch dog of the treasury, couldn't be convinced that foolish things like new trousers should be bought when the money would get many feet of brand new lumber. Nowadays the matter of frazzled trousers wouldn't make so much difference, because when Mr. Thompson or his partner come up Broadway this summer they are usually seated in one of the firm's herd of plunging automobiles.

At almost every turn on the island one will meet a sulphitic showman, sometimes raw and crude, sometimes a college man or self-educated, but always interesting. A business man sat down with Skip Dundy one night and listened to tales of the resort from the financial side—of the $200,000 loss which every rainy Sunday in summer means to Surf avenue, and of the tons of perishable goods that are carted away from there on the days following; of the automobile service that Skip established between the island and the Sub-Treasury when he learned that the banks did not want to bother with 150,000 or more pennies at a clip.

The business man caught a late train without having visited any of the shows, but he said on the way home that Coney Island was far more interesting than he had expected.

Oddly enough, the real show in the opinion of the natives of Coney is not in the island's own attractions, but in the people that visit them from New York. Sam Davis, manager of one of the big dancing floors at the resort, says that an interesting book could be written on "The Freaks That Come to Coney."

Sam will point out to you the young Brooklyn stenographer who has signed a contract with a wealthy Harlem grocer in which it is stated that the girl is to come to Coney every evening during the season to dance only with the Harlem plutocrat of canned goods. As the season wanes the man comes less and less, but in the meantime the stenographer must be on the job if she wishes to earn the $20 a week the grocer pays her for doing so.

Most of the old disreputable Coney Island was wiped out by Fred Thompson's dreams, aided by the big fire. What is left of it is mercifully covered from all except those who deliberately seek that sort of thing.

One glance at the hollow eyed girl lurking in a dark doorway at midnight, however, tells you that back of the gayety there are sadness and sorrow too. Still, the most innocent country girl visiting New York on her ten day vacation can go to the new Coney Island without fear of harm. She does go, thousands of her, and as she steps from the car into Surf avenue, eyes wide with wonder and lips parted and gazes on the fairyland, her gladness is good to see.

And when dusk falls and the forest of tapering towers and minarets take on a weird, unearthly shimmer as they reach toward the bluest of skies, one can understand her little throaty gasp as half a million planets flash out suddenly upon pinnacle and dome to bring the daytime back again. Every night the miracle is repeated, and each repetition is still a miracle.

Flash after flash responds to the touch of an unseen hand. Vague masses that a moment before stood cold and ghostlike in the gathering darkness burst into light, and as the bands begin their evening music buildings become constellations, while along quaint eaves and balustrades of the stage carpenter's Europe runs the magic glow, arch shimmering above arch and tower above tower, till all about is a lacework of delicate, trembling beauty.

As the home bound boat turns back through the Narrows little people with tousled heads are sleeping in their mothers' arms. The tired mother still gazes back, fascinated, from the after deck toward the fading picture where the distant lights of the Island have merged into a great live coal. And somewhere in among the lights a young man is still dreaming his dreams beneath his pancake hat and the hollow eyed girl is standing in the shadows of a doorway, and a bandit queen—her crimson shirt discarded now for quieter street dress—trudges home alone toward her little room in a cheerless hotel.

NEW YORK AND LONDON.

Items of Greatness in the Two Cities—Where We Excel.

It is said of London in praise of its greatness that:

In London a child is born every three minutes and a death is recorded every five minutes. The city contains 700 railway stations, 5,000 omnibuses, 7,000 hansoms, 14,000 cabs and 7,000 tramcars. Daily 1,000,000 persons travel on underground railways.

Eleven railway bridges span the Thames. Four thousand postmen deliver 10,000,000 letters weekly, walking a distance equal to twice the circumference of the globe. There are 10,000 miles of overhead telegraph wires, and the number of telegraph messages received in London in a year is 6,000,000.

Ninety million gallons of water are consumed daily. The railways, omnibuses, cabs and steamboats convey 1,273,000,000 passengers daily and the underground railways 263,000,000 passengers.

The 118 square miles of London are lighted by 4,974 electric arc lights, 1,185 electric incandescent lights, 56,000 incandescent gas lamps and 18,248 flat flame gas burners.

Well, New York can do something in the same lines of municipal greatness.

With a smaller number of inhabitants than London it exceeds it in the volume of travel, in the amount paid for work, in the volume of work done and in the increase in the number of buildings, occupants of a building and of population.

Where London consumes 90,000,000 gallons of water a day, New York consumes 500,000,000. Where London has an area of 118 square miles, New York has 326.

In New York every minute two immigrants arrive—more than 1,000,000 in a year. Every six minutes a child is born. Every seven minutes there is a funeral. Every hour a new building is erected.

New York has more children at its public schools than London; fewer paupers; a lower death rate; fewer uninhabited houses; more parks, more bridges, fewer jails, a better distributed street traffic and a higher standard of health.

New York's subway carries more passengers in a day than London's underground. The number of crimes of violence is twice as large in London as in New York, and the number of arrests for drunkenness in London is four times as great as the number of arrests for the same cause in New York.

New York has more fires in a year than London and they entail greater loss. It has less shipping as a port than London, fewer clerks to the whole population employed, but more bosses or employers.